

The Soul of Polynesia

claim that marvel to a dull world
which, having
eyes, seems to him to see not And
precisely what
the master-artist sees, that the world
quite often
does not want to see.

Paul Gauguin was a master-artist.
He had
the gift of extraordinary sight. But he
was unique
among even master-artists, for exactly
what he
saw, what he strove to paint, no other
has seen or
at least has painted. And of all visions
his was
one for which the modern world has
least use.
Look at the Gauguin pictures. The
modern world
does not want to see the lurking
lovely-hideous
devil in what it delights to call * dear
Mother
nature/ It does not want to see men
and women
stripped naked not only of clothes but
of the con-
ventional trivialities of mind and soul.
And the
fierce ascetic beauty that the master
visioned even
in and behind such things it cannot
understand.
Pilate and Herod agree together in the
condemna-

tion of this beauty, accused before
them by the
Chief Priests. Or so Paul Gauguin
would have
put it, so it seemed to him, and at
least for that
vision he endured a cross and despised
a shame*

Was he happy here in Punaauia ?
Did he find
the thing for which he made such
sacrifices ?